United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.11

General Assembly

Fiftieth session

Official Records

First Committee

11th Meeting

Thursday, 26 October 1995, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun . . . . . (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Although we know that we are pressed for time, I must nevertheless say how pleased we are to see you, Mr. Chairman, guiding our work. Your election, together with the well-deserved elections of the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, will, we know, ensure the successful accomplishment of the Committee's work.

In recent days, in the course of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we have heard this quotation from the Preamble to the Charter repeated frequently:

> "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" —

one of the aspirations voiced at the time of the founding of the United Nations. Only a few weeks after the Charter was signed, and before it came into effect, bringing the United Nations into being, the unforgettable bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki took place and the nuclear era had begun. Fifty years have elapsed since the United Nations was established and countless resolutions have been adopted in the General Assembly with regard to nuclear weapons and to the need to ban and eliminate them, and as one of the first steps towards such a goal to ban nuclear tests of their qualitative or quantitative capacities.

Now that 50 years have elapsed and now that, with the disappearance of its East-West confrontation, the chapter of the cold war is closed and no longer a substantial part of international relations, the Cuban delegation must say it feels discouraged that, despite the clamour of the international community and despite the will of the majority of the Members of the United Nations, we have been unable to realize our aspirations. Nuclear weapons continue to exist and, even in the subsoil of our Earth, earthquakes are being caused by nuclear tests. While there have been reductions in the huge nuclear arsenals of the States that possess the largest stores of nuclear weapons, work is none the less under way to improve the weapons. It is surprising also that, while the cold war has come to an end, the military doctrines that support the possession of nuclear weapons have not yet become a part of the past and a subject merely for historians and museums. Rather, they continue to exist and indeed some are defending their relevance.

All Member States are faced with an undeniable challenge. This is particularly true of States that heretofore did not support a comprehensive ban on testing. Early in 1996 there will be a treaty banning all kinds of nuclear testing, including peaceful and simulated tests. My delegation supports the adoption of a clear and unequivocal message emanating from this session of the General Assembly in this regard. It should be embodied in a draft resolution that would endorse the sense of the international community and that could be adopted without a vote.

Our delegation once again reiterates its strong support for a ban on, and the elimination of, nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. On 25 March 1995, in

95-86450 (E)

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keeping with this position, and as a demonstration of our country's will fully to join in the Latin American and Caribbean community, my country decided to sign the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — and has taken the necessary steps for its ratification.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba indicated when signing the Treaty

> "In the shadow of the serious dangers and together with great sacrifices this event too is the reaffirmation by the Government of the Republic of Cuba of the truly pacific nature of its own nuclear programme. We reiterate with a sense of responsibility that obstacles that have prevented Cuba's full adherence to that Treaty continue to affect the security of our country seriously."

As was indicated in the statement that was affixed to the signature,

> "The only nuclear Power in this part of the world, the United States of America, has practised a hostile policy against Cuba, continues its economic and financial blockade of the country, and maintains, forcibly and against the will of our people, an illegal occupation of part of the national territory. Its vessels carrying nuclear weapons transit that area. The future solution of this problem should be considered as a prerequisite to having our country continue to subscribe to this Treaty."

On that same day the Chemical Weapons Convention was also signed and it too is being studied with a view to its ratification. My country attaches great importance thereto. Accordingly, last March, together with the Provisional Technical Secretariat, a regional seminar was organized on the national application of that Convention. We are actively working at The Hague with a view to settling the outstanding issues that are being negotiated.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that the tremendous efforts being made to conclude the negotiations on this Convention — and, more recently, the residual aspects of it — have not yet been matched by States which, because of their possession of chemical weapons, should be in the vanguard of the ratification process. Cuba calls on the international community to delay no longer in adhering to this Convention.

As concerns weapons of mass destruction, Cuba, as a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, has been working actively with other delegations in the meetings recently held to assess and agree on possible new measures to verify the implementation of that Convention. The meetings that are to take place next year will continue to receive our full attention.

In our delegation's opinion, it is essential that we continue to stress the indissoluble link between peace and development. From our perspective, the idea that just and lasting peace is impossible without the conditions for economic and social development remains fully valid. Furthermore, there can be no social justice or economic and social progress without a prevailing atmosphere of peace and security. The Cuban President's statement at the Eleventh Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held recently in Colombia remains particularly relevant in this regard. He stated that:

> "The production of increasingly sophisticated and dangerous weapons continues. Trade in these weapons is growing. There is ferocious competition between the major manufacturers. The major weapons salesmen participate as permanent members in every meeting of the Security Council. These are the people who are trying to promote peace on behalf of the United Nations. Could it be that the end of the cold war has allowed the tremendous resources once devoted to the arms race to be allocated to more noble causes?"

There can be no doubt that the benefits to the economic and social development of our countries, particularly the developing countries, have yet to become a reality. In the new international world, it is astounding to learn that the United States Congress is approving military budgets larger than those proposed by its President. One wonders who wants more weapons when what is necessary is an even greater and more decisive contribution by all wealthy countries to the economic and social development of all peoples and the achievement of a just and lasting peace.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): On behalf of the 13 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I wish to assure you of our full support as you discharge your responsibilities. We also wish to pay a well-deserved

tribute to Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodríguez of Ecuador, who presided over this Committee at its forty-ninth session.

We wish to thank the Secretary-General and the Disarmament Commission for the reports they have submitted on the items under consideration. We also wish to acknowledge the contributions of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, the Institute for Disarmament Research and the Conference on Disarmament.

In recent years, significant progress has been achieved in the field of disarmament. International treaties have been established for virtually all existing categories of weapons of mass destruction. Arms agreements, such as START I and START II, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Open Skies Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol, would have been inconceivable in the tense decades of the cold war. We are making progress towards the achievement of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear-explosive purposes, and there are progressive attempts to reduce nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate goal of eliminating them.

CARICOM countries are proud to be parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was signed in 1967. We welcome Cuba as a signatory to the Treaty. This, the signing of the Quadripartite Safeguards Agreement last year and the ratifications by Brazil, Argentina and Chile have consolidated the regime established by the Treaty. We encourage the establishment of proposed free zones across the world and welcome the Declaration on the Denuclearization of the South Pacific.

We have been pleased to note the joint announcement made on 20 October by the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of their intention to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in 1996, thereby joining Russia and China as signatories to the Protocols. We believe that these developments can only further strengthen international peace and security and that they are positive steps towards the early completion of negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

At the same time, we urge nuclear-weapon States to respect the moratorium on nuclear testing. Like other non-nuclear-weapon States, CARICOM countries supported the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on the basis of the declared intention of nuclear Powers to exercise restraint in relation to vertical proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

We reiterate our serious disappointment at the recent decisions by some nuclear-weapon States to resume nuclear testing. We view these decisions as a serious blow to the non-proliferation regime and we associate ourselves fully with the statement on this matter issued in September 1995 by the States Parties to the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga.

In 1978, the participants in the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament concluded that disarmament had become an imperative and the most urgent task facing the international community, and consequently agreed in the Programme of Action that priorities and measures in the field of disarmament should be undertaken as a matter of urgency in the areas of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, and conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects. There was also established a comprehensive phased programme with agreed time-frames for progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their ultimate and complete elimination at the earliest possible time.

We also wish to recall that in 1990, in its Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, the General Assembly noted that the specific goals of the Second Disarmament Decade were not fully realized. The General Assembly identified common goals in the nuclear, conventional and chemical fields and supported initiatives such as the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Declaration affirmed the positive role that an informed public could play in the process of disarmament by promoting a constructive and realistic dialogue on issues relating to disarmament. The Declaration ended by noting that:

> "As the world moves towards the twenty-first century, it is evident that future generations will need increasing knowledge and understanding of the interdependent nature of life on the planet. Education on international peace and security issues will play a fundamental part in allowing every individual to realize his or her role as a responsible member of the world community." (*General Assembly resolution 45/62, annex, para. 7*)

Over the years, our goals have not changed, although they have at times seemed elusive. Most recently, at the Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we

representatives of Member States adopted a Declaration stating that,

> "While recognizing that action to secure global peace, security and stability will be futile unless the economic and social needs of people are addressed ... [we will] strongly support United Nations, regional and national efforts on arms control, limitation and disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, in all aspects, and other weapons of mass destruction ... in pursuit of our common commitment to a world free of all these weapons." (*resolution 50/6, para. 1*)

We note that, despite these lofty commitments, we have been unable, through the Disarmament Commission, to carry out the mandate of resolution 49/75 B, in which the Commission was requested to:

> "make a preliminary assessment of the implementation of the Declaration [of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade] as well as suggestions that may be put forward to ensure appropriate progress, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session". (*resolution 49/75 B, para. 2*)

CARICOM countries believe that preparations for the next special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to be held in 1997, must be based on an appraisal of the international situation and the prospects for substantial progress in disarmament, taking into account the interrelated factors of security, development and peace. We believe that recognition must be given to the fact that our concept of security must now include sustained economic growth and sustainable development, the eradication of poverty, the protection of the environment and the investment of the world's resources in people rather than in weapons of war. CARICOM countries believe that, in the preparations for the new special session on disarmament, the link between disarmament and development must be firmly maintained.

We cannot but be aware that, despite a reported reduction since the end of the cold war, global spending on arms still totals over $700 billion per year. This amount easily rivals the debt burden of the developing countries and of the global expenditure needed to redress the social and economic ills affecting most of the world's population. The figures speak for themselves: some 1 billion people live below the subsistence level; half of the world's population may not have access to safe drinking water; three quarters of the developing world do not have adequate sanitary facilities; while at least 200 million people lack basic shelter. We need to renew our political commitment to address this matter at the national and international levels if we are to attain the sought-after promise of peace, stability and development.

Despite the progress in disarmament to which I alluded earlier, much remains to be done. There has, it is true, been progressive harmonization of the multilateral regimes designed to address the proliferation of materials, equipment and technology for nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and missile-delivery systems. But, as the Secretary-General points out in his report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the work of the Organization:

> "... it has become increasingly evident that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the availability of their basic components constitute a growing threat to international peace and security". (*A/50/1, para. 947*)

Moreover, with the dismantling of nuclear weapons, problems regarding means to dispose of the fissile material they contain — plutonium in particular — have been the subject of increasing concern. CARICOM countries support the view that the substantial plutonium stockpiles from commercial nuclear reactors and the proliferation dangers they represent require immediate action. Adequate long-term solutions to the disposition of plutonium must be implemented as soon as possible. This has a direct connection with the problem of the transport of hazardous waste and radioactive material.

In 1992, Heads of Government of CARICOM countries expressed their grave concern at the shipment of plutonium proposed at that time and the prospects for future shipments of hazardous and radioactive material through the Caribbean Sea. Consistent with this approach, Trinidad and Tobago, in its capacity as Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States, issued a call at the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in April 1995 for an end to these shipments through the archipelagic and territorial seas and exclusive economic zones.

At their meeting earlier this month, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Caribbean Community again expressed grave concern at the recurring threat posed to the region through the marine transport of irradiated nuclear fuel, plutonium and high-level radioactive wastes. They noted that, despite the implacable opposition of the Community to this type of activity, there are plans to

continue these shipments well into the next decade. The Ministers reiterated the view that these shipments are of priority concern to CARICOM countries, since they constitute a lethal threat to the environmental integrity of their economies and to the health and livelihood of their peoples. They noted that CARICOM countries possess neither the resources nor the capability to deal with the potentially devastating effects of any possible accidents relating to these shipments, and they recalled that the 1994 Barbados Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States recognized the particular vulnerabilities of these States to environmental disasters and affirmed that the international community had the responsibility to facilitate the efforts of small island developing States in minimizing the stress to their fragile ecosystems. CARICOM countries intend to keep this matter before the attention of the international community.

CARICOM countries cannot ignore the need to control the production and transfers of conventional arms. We believe that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms can be a confidence-building measure to enhance global and regional security by creating transparency. We hope that, in future, quantitative targets can be set for the reduction of conventional weapons. We strongly support the Secretary-General's call for a coordinated response by the international community to the destabilizing effects of the unrestrained flow of conventional weapons and the proliferation of light arms, particularly automatic assault weapons and anti-personnel mines. The Secretary-General has pointed out that expenditure on light weapons represents nearly one third of the world's total arms trade.

Often linked to the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and other criminal activity, the illicit arms traffic has a destabilizing effect, particularly on small, vulnerable, open societies, and poses a very real threat to international peace and security. The problem is compounded when this traffic is directed to areas of intra-State conflicts which, as stated in document A/50/60, are often characterized by:

> "the collapse of state institutions, especially the police and judiciary, with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order, and general banditry and chaos". (*A/50/60, para. 13*)

We agree with the Secretary-General that:

> "Progress since 1992 in the area of weapons of mass destruction and major weapons systems must be followed by parallel progress in conventional arms, particularly with respect to light weapons". (*ibid, para. 65*)

To be effective, however, any action taken must include what the Secretary-General calls "micro-disarmament", as well as institutional reform, improved police and judicial systems, electoral reform and economic and social development.

A related matter of concern to CARICOM countries is the decision to shelve the project proposed by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to study the military aspects of the security of small States within the context of the post-cold-war period. The project had been expected to produce comparative studies of small States in the Gulf, Asia-Pacific, Indian Ocean and Caribbean regions. We hope that the project can be revived and implemented as a matter of urgency.

We also wish to express our concern at the report of the imminent closure of the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Lomé, Lima and Kathmandu. We believe that, with the focus now fixed firmly on conventional weapons, as emphasized by the Secretary-General, these Centres could play a useful role in the development of regional initiatives and in education involving both governmental and non-governmental institutions. We hope that a way can be found for the activities of these Centres to be continued, and indeed enhanced, to reach a wider cross-section of the countries of the various regions, including the small States of the Caribbean.

In his "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace", the Secretary-General has reminded us that:

> "... we are still in a time of transition. The end of the cold war was a major movement of tectonic plates and the after-shocks continue to be felt. But even if the ground beneath our feet has not yet settled, we still live in a new age that holds great promise for both peace and development." (*A/50/60, para. 5*)

If we are to fulfil this promise, it is up to us and the States we represent to meet the challenge of this new age.

Mr. Sukayri (Jordan): As a member of the Bureau, I am proud to have the opportunity to work with you very closely, Sir, and my delegation pledges its full cooperation and support to you and to my dear colleagues, the other members of the Bureau. Your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador, and his colleagues

deserve our sincere appreciation for their achievements and dedication during the forty-ninth session.

Over the past few decades, the question of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has enjoyed top priority on the international agenda. In the past few years, however, this issue has become even more important. After the end of the cold war, which brought about an end to the super-Power arms race, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has become a major threat to international peace and security. Hence, the importance of the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was held in the spring of this year.

Despite its significance, the indefinite extension of the NPT was not the only important achievement of the Conference. The decisions on the strengthening of the review process for the Treaty and on the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, as well as the resolution on the Middle East, are all of the utmost importance.

As we know, two of the aforementioned decisions, as well as the resolution on the Middle East, provide for the universality of the Treaty. In view of the fact that only nine countries are still outside the Treaty, and taking into consideration the fact that some of these nine States are already involved in other areas of the international non-proliferation regime — namely, the nuclear-weapon-free zones, which make their accession to the Treaty less urgent — my delegation believes that new methods of securing the universality of the Treaty have to be introduced. One of these could be the establishment of an ad hoc committee with the mandate to approach each and every one of these States, individually or collectively, in order to secure their accession to the Treaty.

Other possibilities should be explored, and in addition to the General Assembly's efforts one can envisage the Security Council playing a decisive role in this regard. Without prejudice to the sovereignty of any Member State, and as a last resort, the Council could act under Chapter VII of the Charter and adopt a resolution calling for the immediate accession to the Treaty by all Member States that have not yet acceded to it and that are not parties to any international nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Collective security, as a principle means of guaranteeing, *inter alia*, the vital interests of all of international society in peace and security, must prevail over the interests of individual States.

The ultimate objective of the international non-proliferation regime, of which the NPT is the cornerstone, is general and complete nuclear disarmament. As we do every year, we commend the progress made by the United States and the Russian Federation in the area of nuclear arms reduction. However, more effective steps are required, on the one hand, to rid the world of its existing nuclear-weapon stockpiles and, on the other, to stop and roll back nuclear proliferation where it has occurred. The same applies to other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery.

We commend and highly appreciate the efforts being made within the Conference on Disarmament with a view to the conclusion by 1996 of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We commend, in particular, the recently-announced waiver of the 10-year withdrawal term and urge all parties in the Conference on Disarmament to conclude their negotiations as soon as possible and come out with a zero-yield comprehensive treaty.

The next step should be to negotiate a multilateral, effectively verifiable cut-off treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive devices. Such a treaty would complement the CTBT.

As far as the Middle East is concerned, the universality of the NPT is of the utmost importance. Pending the accession to the Treaty by all States in the region that have not yet done so, it is imperative to reactivate our efforts in all forums towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

Jordan has been participating in good faith in the multilateral negotiations on arms control and disarmament. In view of the recent positive developments within the ongoing peace process in the region, we are hopeful that the multilateral negotiations will soon lead to effective and verifiable arms control agreements between the States of the region.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East will be a major achievement. We fully support this goal and believe that, in addition to its contribution to general and complete nuclear disarmament, such a zone will enhance confidence and eliminate a major threat to regional security.

We should recall at this point that, in its resolution on the Middle East, the 1995 Review and Extension

Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) expressed its concern over the continued existence in the Middle East of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and reaffirmed the importance of the early realization of universal adherence to the Treaty.

The Conference also devoted two paragraphs of its Middle East resolution to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the region. Operative paragraph 5 of the resolution

> "Calls upon all States in the Middle East to take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress toward, *inter alia*, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective." (*NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), p. 14, para. 5*)

Operative paragraph 6 states

> "Calls upon all States party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems." (*ibid., para. 6*)

These two paragraphs speak for themselves and need no further assertion. Therefore, we call upon Israel, the only State in the region with significant nuclear capabilities, to respond positively to this resolution, as well as to all relevant United Nations resolutions, by adhering to the NPT and placing its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and also to take all necessary steps for facilitating the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

My delegation welcomes the fruitful outcome of the work of the Group of Experts which has prepared the final text of a treaty on an African nuclear-weapon-free zone. On this occasion, I should like to congratulate all African delegations and wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Chairman and Members of the Group, particularly to Mr. Sola Ogunbanwo, the Coordinator and Chief Expert Adviser on the African nuclear-weapon-free zone for his relentless efforts in this regard. I hope that this great achievement will motivate all States in the region of the Middle East to follow suit.

In spite of their significance as a major source of threat to international peace and security, weapons of mass destruction are not the only such source. There are conventional weapons that are excessively injurious and have indiscriminate effects. Realizing this fact, and convinced of the importance of banning such weapons, which cause much human suffering, Jordan has recently adhered to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects. Along the same lines, Jordan commends and actively supports all efforts leading to a complete ban on the export of anti-personnel land-mines.

We are satisfied with the steps taken so far pertaining to the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. However, in order to rationalize the rationalization process, we here suggest the biennialization of this item on the agenda of this Committee, i.e., we urge the Committee to take a decision during this session to the effect that, as of this session or the next, the question of rationalizing the work of the Committee will be taken up once every two years.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that your skill and great diplomatic experience will carry our work to a successful conclusion, and I assure you of my delegation's support for and cooperation in the work that lies ahead. I wish also to express the gratitude of my delegation to your predecessor, Ambassador Valencia Rodriguez, for his able guidance of this Committee during the forty-ninth session.

The occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provides an opportunity for reflection. We should take stock of our achievements in the field of disarmament and, at the same time, we should strive to define the course of future endeavours in this field.

On 11 May of this year, the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted three decisions: on strengthening the review process of the Treaty; on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament; and on the extension of the NPT, as well as a resolution on the Middle East.

The four decisions, considered as a package, reflected and continue to reflect the interests and objectives of the parties to the NPT, and should guide the international community in its pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation, and towards an enhanced Treaty review process.

It was generally expected that these lofty objectives would ensure the adoption of a final declaration by the NPT Review and Extension Conference since the purpose of the Conference — as we should remind ourselves — was to review and extend, and not just to extend, the Treaty. The mistaken notion will no doubt be short-lived, and my delegation hopes that future review conferences will actually include review. The parties to the NPT must honour their undertakings and must comprehensively and candidly face up to the weaknesses and deficiencies in the implementation of the Treaty.

After all, the success of the Treaty so far has been due primarily to the nuclear-weapon States' fulfilment of their obligations under it. It is a recognized fact that the nuclear-weapon States are not discharging satisfactorily the nuclear-disarmament process called for in the provisions of article VI of the Treaty. This disparity in the fulfilment of obligations cannot be perpetuated.

In this context, it should be pointed out that, in accordance with the Principles and Objectives adopted last April and the programme of action contained therein, the nuclear-weapon States undertook to fulfil with determination the undertakings with regard to nuclear disarmament, as set out in article VI of the Treaty, and they reaffirmed their commitment to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. It is of paramount importance that these commitments be honoured, the programme of action accomplished and, consequently, the existing nuclear arsenals eliminated within a specified time-frame.

Universality is a *sine qua non* for the attainment of the ultimate objectives of the NPT. In the absence of universality, the dangers posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons will persist and, with time, will increase throughout the world. The current situation in the Middle East region bears witness to such threats. One country is engaging in advanced, ambiguous nuclear activities, which are not subject to international supervision. This imbalance is unacceptable. If allowed to continue, it will only lead to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region and could well carry the seeds of a regional arms race, with all its grave consequences.

In this context, I wish to recall that last week the representative of Israel stated before the First Committee that Israel supports the principle of non-proliferation, recalling his country's vote in favour of the NPT in 1968 and its support for the indefinite extension of the Treaty. My delegation welcomes Israel's support for the principle of non-proliferation. But after a quarter of a century it is time for deeds to replace words and for Israel to accede to the NPT. My delegation reiterates the call on Israel to accede to the Treaty and to place its nuclear facilities under full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Egypt views with great satisfaction the adoption of the final text of the Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa — accomplished during the thirty-first regular session, at summit level, of the Organization of African Unity, held in June this year at Addis Ababa — and looks forward to joining other members of the African Group in submitting to the First Committee a draft resolution on the Treaty. This represents a most important achievement in the field of non-proliferation, in the framework of article VII of the NPT. It expands the total area covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones and brings us one step closer to the goal of general and complete disarmament.

I wish to express my delegation's appreciation of the efforts of Dr. Sola Ogunbanwo, Chief Expert Adviser on the African nuclear-weapon-free zone, who very ably assisted the group of experts. Egypt looks forward to hosting the Treaty-signing ceremony next year. In this context, Egypt sincerely hopes that the nuclear-weapon States will without delay ratify Protocol I to the Treaty.

Regrettably, the Middle East lags far behind Africa in this respect, despite the unanimous calls by the General Assembly over the past 15 years for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East; despite the Security Council's recognition, in its resolution 687 (1991), that the goal shall be to establish in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and of all missiles for their delivery; and despite the call, in paragraph 5 of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, for

> "all States in the Middle East to take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards, *inter alia*, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this

objective". *(NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I, resolution on the Middle East, para. 5)*

This clarion call from the international community is in response to the existence of an advanced unsafeguarded nuclear programme in Israel and in recognition of the fact that the Middle East is a region that, in the light of its history, cannot afford any ambiguity in this regard.

For many years Egypt has conducted extensive consultations with all regional parties, as well as with all extraregional parties involved in the Middle East peace process, and it has submitted several proposals in all relevant forums at the regional and international levels with a view to advancing specific arrangements that would contribute to the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The latest of these initiatives was in the framework of the multilateral Middle East peace process, where Egypt presented several proposals in the context of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security, concerning provisions and elements related the establishment of such a zone, as is mentioned in paragraph 5 of the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East (A/50/325). There has not been any substantive, constructive response from Israel to these proposals.

I find it necessary to recall here that for many years Israel had stated that such a zone could be established only through direct negotiations between the parties concerned. Direct negotiations began more than three years ago in the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security, yet all efforts to start meaningful negotiations with a view to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region were unsuccessful. In fact, Israel blocked any serious consideration of the issue, holding it hostage to certain preconditions revolving around "peace and reconciliation" with all States in the region.

If such a position might initially seem to possess some semblance of justification, closer scrutiny and the experience of the last three years reflect vividly the absence of any genuine intent to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

It is our firm belief that a comprehensive examination of the modalities and all the related aspects for establishing the zone should begin now in the regional negotiations in the context of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security. No matter how prolonged this process may prove to be, the point to be emphasized is the timing. The initiation phase is now — and not, as the representative of Israel stated in the Committee last week:

> "the day when conditions in the region will be auspicious for the launching of discussions on a nuclear-weapon-free zone". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, First Committee, 8th meeting, p. 4)*

Peace and security are two sides of the same coin. Security, on the other hand, cannot be realized unless it is reciprocal and extends to all. Security cannot be the private domain of one party at the expense of all the other regional parties. In our contemporary world, security is synonymous with the ability to ensure protection against nuclear threats.

Egypt will continue to advocate and strive for the creation of a nuclear- weapon-free zone in the Middle East, within the broader initiative for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and will again this year submit a draft resolution on the establishment of such a zone.

I now turn to the comprehensive test-ban treaty. Despite initial slow progress on a comprehensive treaty during the first half of this year, the last session of the Conference on Disarmament has registered satisfactory results, particularly on the scope of the treaty and the acceptance by three nuclear-weapon States of a comprehensive zero-yield ban on tests.

On the question of the scope of the treaty, Egypt firmly supports a complete and total ban on all nuclear explosions without any exception, regardless of their purpose or their yield. Indeed a test-ban treaty with a scope which falls short of banning all nuclear-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions would not be comprehensive and would therefore be ineffective.

With respect to verification and compliance, it is our view that the verification mechanism of the treaty must be structured in such a way as to provide adequate and effective detection without being excessively complicated or costly. The possibility of providing, within this mechanism, for sanctions against non-compliance should be seriously considered. We believe that agreement on the structure of such a mechanism and of its component parts can be reached rapidly and we urge all delegations to ensure that this is achieved.

As far as the proposed treaty Organization is concerned, we believe that this function should be carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency. This would allow us to benefit from the experience accumulated thus far by the Agency in implementing the relevant provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and would be most effective in terms of cost.

Our message to the Conference on Disarmament is very clear: a universal and effectively verifiable test-ban treaty must be concluded during the first half of 1996 and be ready for signature by the beginning of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

The next priority on the disarmament agenda must be a comprehensive agreement banning the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. We must clearly state that on our part we do not see much merit in a fissile material ban which would only encompass future production and thereby maintain a most unsatisfactory status quo. If our work on a ban on fissile material is to have any relevance it must serve to prevent both vertical and horizontal proliferation and produce tangible results. This dual objective cannot be achieved unless existing stockpiles of weapons-usable fissile material form an integral part of the negotiations, as reflected in the report of the Special Coordinator on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament and as indicated in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee established within its framework.

As for security assurances, it will be recalled that on 11 April 1995, in an effort to respond to the clearly justifiable and logical demand by States which of their own volition, had renounced the nuclear option and had agreed to live up to their responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with Article 26 of the Charter, the Security Council adopted resolution 984 (1995) to provide security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

However, when it came to formulating and drafting that particular resolution, the five permanent members of the Security Council completely by-passed any dialogue with the non-nuclear-weapon States — or I should say, did not open this dialogue in a timely manner. Some States, including Egypt, did engage in some negotiations with the five permanent members at a later stage.

We believe that non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT have the legitimate right to effective, comprehensive and unconditional security assurances in a legally-binding form which would provide, in an effective manner, for the following essential principles: a clear determination that the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security; a trigger mechanism that would ensure a response by the Security Council to any attack or threat of attack by nuclear weapons; and a commitment by the Security Council to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace.

Such assurances should complement those provided in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) and would be in conformity with the letter and spirit of the decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Disarmament adopted on 11 May 1995 at the Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, which called, *inter alia*, for the consideration of further steps to assure non-nuclear weapon States party to the Treaty against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons. These steps could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument.

In addition to the above-mentioned principles, we continue to advocate complementary steps which would serve to enhance the security of non-nuclear-weapon States pending the attainment of an internationally legally binding instrument. These are: the provision of more elaborate security assurances for those non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT that are also parties to nuclear-weapon-free zones in their respective regions; a renunciation by the five permanent members of the Security Council of the unanimity rule contained in Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter pertaining to the concurring votes of the five permanent members with regard to the application of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States; and a commitment by all States parties to the NPT not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any State party to the NPT that does not possess or place nuclear weapons on its territory.

My delegation believes that, unless all these steps are taken, Security Council resolution 984 (1995) falls short of general expectations and is wanting in credibility, deterrence and protective value.

Now some brief comments on the question of transparency in armaments. Many of us who participated in the work of the First Committee in 1991 will recall the intensive negotiations that took place on the text of what was then draft resolution A/46/L.18, later to became General Assembly resolution 46/36 L entitled

"Transparency in armaments". It is no secret that already at the time when the matter was discussed there was significant divergence of views on the substance of that resolution. However, the modest initial steps to establish the register in 1991 were then recognized and accepted as a practical necessity since the evolutionary nature of this mechanism was abundantly clear from General Assembly resolution 46/36 L. It was also clear at that time that there was a prescribed time-frame for ensuring the applicability of this evolution to be completed during the 1994 session of the Group of Governmental Experts which was mandated to undertake this task.

The failure of the Group of Governmental Experts to reach agreement on the issues of the development of the scope of the Register or of the expansion of the scope of the Register to include information on existing stockpiles and indigenous production capabilities or on the incorporation in the Register of weapons of mass destruction was a clear indication to many delegations, including my own, of the lack of political will to embrace meaningfully the principle of transparency. We can only attribute the reluctance of over half the membership of the United Nations to participate in this mechanism to their legitimate concern not to associate themselves with a process that is currently blatantly discriminatory.

Prospects for the eventual development of the Register in terms of the expansion of its scope seem remote in view of the apparent lack of political will on the part of the international community, or of some in the international community, to faithfully embrace the principles and objectives of transparency or apply them in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner. However, Egypt will continue to support the application of the principles of transparency to all fields of disarmament in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner that would serve to guarantee the security interests of all Member States equally and ultimately lead us to a mechanism that would ensure transparency in armaments rather than a register of selective and limited conventional arms transfers which, from the beginning, we would oppose.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that security is reciprocal and extends to all. We must therefore, in our collective commitment to achieve security at the international as well as at the regional level, ensure that our efforts are comprehensive in addressing every member of the international community and that the obligations prescribed will be balanced and equitable for all.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset I should like to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of this important session of the First Committee. I am confident that with your vast diplomatic skills and knowledge of international affairs, particularly in the areas of disarmament and international security, you will effectively guide the deliberations of the First Committee to a successful conclusion. I should also like to express my delegation's sincere gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Rodríguez of Ecuador, who conducted the proceedings of the Committee at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in such an exemplary manner. Let me also take this opportunity to extend my felicitations to the other members of the Bureau.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has provided us with an exceptional opportunity to assess our efforts in the past five decades to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It also gives us an opportunity, based on the assessment that we make, to chart a future course of action which best serves the United Nations in pursuance of its lofty goals.

It is unfortunate to note that our performance in the past does not leave us much room for complacency. Right from the day that the United Nations was established, and contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter, a group of States did not leave one stone unturned in pursuit of the most destructive weapons that mankind had ever known. Even the institutions that we have created since then have failed to curb these weapons and to reverse the arms race which, despite the end of the cold war, continues unabated, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In this context, it is also important to note that in recent years certain Powers and their allies have launched a systematic campaign in various United Nations forums to replace the priorities of disarmament and security as envisaged in the Final Document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, of 1978.

For the sake of brevity, I would like to review briefly the performance of some of the disarmament and security bodies and conferences in 1995. The Conference on Disarmament did not make any progress on any part of its agenda and was unable to establish its traditional ad hoc committees with the exception of a committee on the comprehensive test-ban treaty. The United Nations Disarmament Commission, after four years of intense negotiations and deliberations, could not conclude its work on nuclear disarmament and the review of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. As in the past few years, the

Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean did not have a successful session because those who did not share peaceful initiatives and approaches aimed at restoring peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region and its main branches had decided not to participate in its work. The Preparatory Commission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at The Hague did not make progress on items on its agenda, especially on those items dealing with the concerns and the inalienable rights of developing countries, in particular article 11 of the Convention. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) decided, by a majority vote, to extend the Treaty indefinitely. By using any means possible, a majority was eventually established for the indefinite extension of the Treaty by nuclear States parties and their principal allies. None the less, it left many principal quarters unconvinced. Even where support was expressed, it was in many cases subject to reservations and conditions. The Conference also failed to adopt a final document on the operation of the Treaty in the past 25 years, which indicates that the purposes of the preamble and the provisions of the Treaty have not yet been realized.

Despite the foregoing assessment, we consider the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT as a turning-point in our efforts towards a world free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. The nuclear-weapon States have made certain commitments — reflected in the documents of the Conference, which were adopted in a package. We take it that these commitments have been made in good faith. They will be made subject to rigorous assessment and evaluation in our review process, which will be retriggered at the 1997 Preparatory Committee, as decided.

In this regard, Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati, the Foreign Minister of Iran, in his statement before the General Assembly on 25 September 1995, said, *inter alia*:

> "The indefinite extension of the Treaty must be viewed within the framework of three major final documents of the Conference, together with the necessity for all signatories, particularly the nuclear Powers, to commit themselves to the full implementation of all provisions and objectives of the Treaty. These obligations include achieving complete nuclear disarmament, expanding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, strengthening the role and enhancing the authority of the IAEA as the only international body competent to oversee the good-faith discharge of Member States' responsibilities under the Treaty, ensuring the universality of the NPT as an urgent priority, and establishing the Middle East as a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In this connection, the nuclear-weapon States should, as a first step, prove their good faith by refraining from nuclear testing and finalizing a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 5th meeting, pp. 30-31)*

The conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, despite some of its shortcomings, was a truly historic achievement because it is the first multilateral treaty that provides for the elimination of an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. Iran, as the latest victim of such inhumane weapons, actively and wholeheartedly contributed in the negotiations on the Convention, was a sponsor of the relevant resolution at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly and was among the first signatories of this important Convention.

The Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes that the effectiveness and universality of the Convention will depend, to a large extent, on the way it is implemented and, in particular, on the degree to which developed, as well as developing, countries will comply with their obligations. Thus, the implementation of the Convention will require the same degree of perseverance and resourcefulness as did its negotiation. The preparatory work at The Hague, which has otherwise moved forward smoothly, has been marred by difficulties in arriving at solutions to some significant and contentious issues. In fact, most of the questions that were resolved politically during the negotiations at Geneva have met with contradictory interpretations and positions at The Hague. As anticipation mounts for the entry into force of the Convention, efforts need to be intensified to resolve the pending issues, including particularly those related to the definition of chemical weapons, inspection procedures, challenge inspections, and old, abandoned, dumped and buried chemical weapons, as well as the fundamental issue of the peaceful use of chemical material and technology to ensure the finalization of the preparatory work as soon as possible.

Regional and international approaches to disarmament and arms control are mutually reinforcing. In this context, the establishment of zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthen the non-proliferation regime and, thereby, international peace and security. We welcome the progress that has been made towards the creation of the

African nuclear-weapon-free zone and consideration of new, alternative approaches by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to achieve a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region.

In the light of the United Nations constant support for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, constructive and practical measures must be taken towards its realization. Israel's reported possession of nuclear weapons and its refusal to accept the NPT obligations and IAEA safeguards have a grave destabilizing effect in the Middle East. This is a serious issue that requires the attention of the international community. The resolution of this problem is a requisite for diminishing the perceptions of a nuclear threat in the region as well for smoothing the way towards securing a truly universal treaty. The institutionalization of regional confidence-building measures, including placing all facilities and installations under the IAEA safeguards mechanism, the accession by all regional States to all international disarmament instruments, particularly the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Convention on Chemical Weapons, are some of the urgent prerequisites for the establishment of a zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Iran, for its part, has pursued the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and, as an original signatory of the NPT, the Convention on Bacteriological Weapons, the Convention on Chemical Weapons and other arms-control agreements, it has complied with all its obligations under those instruments.

The reckless build-up of conventional weapons has not only devoured much- needed resources but has also reinforced the atmosphere of mistrust and anxiety. Different areas have, as a result, become fair ground for political, economic and commercial exploitation by countries and companies that manufacture weapons. In the post-cold-war era, in particular, the reductions in national defence spending by most major arms-exporting nations have forced the arms industries to seek foreign weapons contracts to replace declining domestic orders. For such sales to materialize and to ensure the sustainability of arms industries, the creation of tension and confrontation in certain regions, such as the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, has been necessary.

In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran, while attaching great importance to transparency in armaments as a confidence-building measure, believes that transparency in armaments cannot by itself control the destabilizing accumulation of conventional arms in various regions. Therefore, what is really necessary — globally and particularly in the Middle East — is serious and genuine international cooperation for the comprehensive, non-selective, non-discriminatory, balanced and effective reduction of conventional arms. This may be realized, *inter alia*, through the reduction of military budgets and weapons procurement, the elimination of the presence of foreign forces in the region and the exercise of self-restraint by the major arms-exporting countries, which pour advanced weaponry into the Middle East and the Persian Gulf region. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been cited by impartial international sources as the country with the lowest defence budget in the region and the least weapons purchases. Indeed, Iran is committed to restoring a genuine and just peace, security and stability in the region.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, my delegation should like to assure you of our full cooperation in your discharge of your important responsibilities at this important session of the First Committee.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Nicaragua, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to preside over the First Committee. We are sure that under your skilful guidance we will successfully conclude our work. We would also like to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodríguez of Ecuador, and to express our congratulations to the other officers of the Committee and members of the Secretariat.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations prompts us to reflect on the Organization's challenges, on its future and on its struggle for peace, disarmament, development, human rights and international security.

In the sphere of disarmament and international security, many challenges still confront the United Nations and must be addressed before the end of this century.

The ideological division of the world, a source of deep distrust and tension, has ended, but despite that, there remain serious risks to peace and security owing to the growing number of regional conflicts and threats caused by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Thus, since the end of the East-West confrontation, arms limitation and disarmament, and in particular nuclear disarmament, continues to have a particular political importance for our countries.

In this spirit we regret to say that neither the agreement reached in May 1995 on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) nor the moratorium on nuclear tests declared by the principal nuclear-weapon Powers have had an influence on the decision of some countries to engage in nuclear tests. Nuclear explosions, whatever their purpose, have been answered by justified protests from the international community, compromising the successful conclusion of the work on a comprehensive test-ban treaty and delaying achievement of the final goal sought by the majority of the world's countries, namely, the total elimination of the nuclear threat.

In the international sphere, the realization of a comprehensive test-ban treaty by 1996, the initiation and speedy conclusion of a treaty on cessation of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, compliance with the decision on Principles and Objectives adopted by the Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the NPT, in which nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their commitment to pursue negotiations and to endeavour to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goals of eliminating them, and strengthening the NPT review process — all these illustrate the steps which, if achieved, would mark a milestone in the development of future progress in disarmament which must lead us to the final goal, namely, the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

In this connection, we note with great satisfaction the developments leading to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa.

We believe that United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Asia and Latin America continue to be of fundamental importance in educating people on the subject of disarmament. There is broad agreement that the political and military changes that have occurred in recent years have shown the importance of regional activities in strengthening the stability and security of Member States. We would therefore regret the closing of those Centres for lack of resources and we urge that some suitable solution be found to that problem.

In Central America, de-mining is a task of extreme urgency and importance, with implications for civilian safety, socio-economic development and the strengthening of democracy. We cannot continue to tolerate the presence of hundreds of thousands of land-mines, which have a particularly serious impact on the civilian population, causing death, maiming and the devastation of large areas of arable land. Although the quantity of mines has decreased, their removal is proceeding at an unacceptably slow pace. Such is the situation in my own country, Nicaragua, where approximately 95,000 anti-personnel land-mines exist throughout the national territory and where it is difficult to implement the programmes envisaged for their removal because of lack of funds, although the Government is making superhuman efforts to carry out de-mining using its own resources, which entails the diversion of funds needed for development, a difficult situation for countries such as ours to bear.

It is important to emphasize the fact that the definitive solution to the problem created by mines and other devices in various parts of the world lies in a total ban on the production, stockpiling, exportation and proliferation of such inhumane weapons.

Moreover, we regret that at the first part of the Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, held at Vienna from 25 September to 13 October, it was not possible to reinforce the provisions of Protocol II, on the use of land-mines.

After a decade of fratricidal war, the Central American region, united by historical, geopolitical, economic and cultural bonds, is now moving towards the consolidation of peace, democracy, disarmament, freedom and development. The achievement of peace through the procedure of establishing a firm and lasting peace in the region has led to a new political, legal and institutional reality in the Central American isthmus, culminating in the elaboration of a treaty on regional security.

This plan was prompted by the new world and regional realities and the new regional outlook, in which security is not grounded solely on military considerations but includes everything related to security, nor only of States but also of individuals. In other words, in keeping with the plan, we must move from military security to human security, from security for defence to cooperative security, from security from threats to preventive security.

The treaty on democratic security is scheduled for signing by the Heads of State of Central American countries at their forthcoming presidential summit meeting to be held in the sister Republic of Honduras in December of this year. It will mark the creation of a new model of regional security. As article 1 of the treaty indicates:

"The Central American model of democratic security is based on democracy and the strengthening of its institutions and on the rule of law, on the existence of Governments elected by universal, free and secret ballot and with unlimited respect for human rights in every State of the Central American region."

The institutional apparatus of this security system is set up in keeping with the provisions of the Tegucigalpa Protocol, the systematic interactions established in it and the practical functioning of the Regional Security Commission. In this connection the meeting at the presidential level is viewed as the highest legal body, the meeting of ministers of foreign affairs as the main body, and the Security Commission as a specialized subsidiary. The Treaty does not create any new institutions and nor does it weaken already existing security provisions; it establishes a gamut of reciprocal rights and duties in harmony with hemisphere and world security systems.

In conclusion, let me say that we in Central America are continuing to support our regional process of modernization, which is attempting to protect the Central American States and their populations from threats to their integrity, their development and their security.

Our commitment to disarmament will continue to grow stronger day by day. It was in this spirit that the Central Americans signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993, and we are now in the process of ratifying it.

We hope that all the nations of the world will contribute to putting an end to the arms race and that the vast resources devoted to armaments will be utilized for economic and social development and, in the end, for improving the quality of life of all our peoples.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Morocco, who will speak in his capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi (Morocco), President of the Conference on Disarmament: Allow me, at the outset, to extend to you, Sir, my warm congratulations on your election to the high office of Chairman of this Committee and to wish you every success in the discharge of your responsibilities. My congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee, who assist you in your tasks.

I am speaking in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament to present to the First Committee the report of the Conference on its work during the 1995 session. This report is contained in document A/50/27, which is before the Committee.

In its report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, the Conference on Disarmament recognized that in 1995 it would have a number of important areas for urgent negotiation and that these would be likely to draw heavily on its time and resources. The Conference decided that the balance of work in 1995 would be considered more fully before it determined which ad hoc committees, besides the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, would be established in 1995. Therefore, in response to the call of the international community, as contained in General Assembly resolution 49/70, which was adopted last year without a vote, the Conference re-established without delay the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and continued intensive negotiations, as a high-priority task, with a view to concluding a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that would contribute to nuclear disarmament and would help to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and to strengthen international security.

During its 1995 session, the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, under the dynamic and effective chairmanship of Ambassador Ludwik Dembinski of Poland, intensified the pace of the negotiations on a draft treaty. The results of these negotiations are reflected in the report of the Conference. It is heartening to note that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee continued in a businesslike manner, despite the turbulence engendered by the recent nuclear-test explosions. Although, admittedly, there is still a long way to go to complete a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, the progress achieved so far in the negotiations augurs well for its completion in 1996.

The most significant advance in the drafting of the Treaty relates to the scope of the ban. Although there is not yet final agreement on the treaty text dealing with scope, a clear convergence of the positions of nuclear-weapon States on this issue is emerging. This was made possible by the initiative of the United States, the United Kingdom and France in committing themselves to a true "zero-yield" treaty that would ban all testing, no matter how small the nuclear device. Given the utmost importance of reaching early agreement on the fundamental issue of scope, it is hoped that the emerging consensus will be consolidated so that the objective of concluding the treaty in 1996 can be achieved.

Another area in which very good progress was made is that of the structure of the international monitoring

system that is to be set up to verify compliance with the obligations under the treaty. While the parameters of the verification regime and the broad responsibilities of the organization that will implement the treaty have been worked out, these cannot be finalized until the scope and basic obligations have been fully agreed upon. Moreover, streamlining of the wording of the draft treaty has resulted in a much more logical text, despite the large amount of material still subject to agreement.

However, further determined efforts are required if agreement is to be reached on other important issues, such as the conditions for the entry into force of the treaty — how many States must ratify it, and which States are essential to its operation; on-site inspections and the circumstances under which international inspectors would be allowed access to a site in order to investigate suspicious events; and the composition of the Executive Council.

I am confident that, given the renewed commitment by all to conclude the treaty as early as possible next year, the Conference on Disarmament will be in a position to present to the General Assembly at this time next year an agreed comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, which the Secretary-General can open for signature as soon as possible thereafter.

The Conference was also able to take a step forward on the issue of the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Thanks to the determined efforts of the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Shannon of Canada, the Conference was able to agree on the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee to start the negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty. The importance of such a measure, in our collective efforts to strengthen the means of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote the process of nuclear disarmament, can hardly be overemphasized, and I am confident that the Conference will soon embark on these negotiations.

In addition, the Conference was able to move the long-outstanding issue of expansion of its membership out of the deadlock that had characterized it for a number of years. Building on General Assembly resolution 49/77 B, which was adopted by consensus at the last session, the Conference was able to register a meaningful measure of progress in this regard. After several rounds of intensive consultations, at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels, during the last stages of the session, the Conference decided, without prejudice to the consideration of other candidatures to date, that Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Finland, Iraq, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe would all, together, assume membership of the Conference at the earliest possible date, to be decided by the Conference.

The same decision also provides for review of the situation following the presentation of progress reports by the President of the Conference on ongoing consultations. In this respect, I can assure the Committee that the consultation process on which I have already embarked will be pursued and intensified, with a view to implementing the decision. I know that, in my endeavours, I can count on the cooperation of all members of the Conference, and I hope to be able to present a report on the outcome of my consultations at the very beginning of the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

However, a cursory reading of the report of the Conference clearly indicates that the problems we had encountered at the beginning of the session regarding the agenda and organization of work were not solved, despite the strenuous efforts of successive Presidents. The Conference was not able to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committees on negative security assurances, transparency in armaments and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Nor was it able to deal in an organized fashion with the issue of nuclear disarmament or with the question of reviewing its current agenda to make it conform with present-day political realities.

I do not think that it is necessary for me to dwell too much on the reasons for our inability to address all items that we deliberately placed on our agenda, as the records of the Conference speak for themselves. While recognizing that this year's session of the Conference was held against the background of the uncertainties surrounding the preparations for, and the outcome of, the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which undoubtedly affected our proceedings, we hoped that the indefinite extension of the NPT would instil wisdom in our work and would promote a balanced approach to all outstanding issues regarding our agenda.

Like my predecessors, I spared no effort to bring about a solution to these problems. I shall therefore continue my consultations, both here and in Geneva, during the period between sessions, with a view to laying the

ground for a smooth and effective start to our next session. I am fully aware that the task is a daunting one because of the fundamental divergence of views that exist within the Conference on the international arms-control and disarmament agenda in the post-cold-war era and following the indefinite extension of the NPT and, in the final analysis, on the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum at this crucial juncture.

Needless to say, such an arms-control and disarmament agenda must take fully into account our common concerns to further strengthen non-proliferation in all its aspects and the importance of the process of nuclear disarmament and strike a balance between the conventional and nuclear aspects of our endeavours. I am confident that the outcome of the deliberations of the First Committee will contribute to laying the foundation for a renewed direction and sense of purpose in the Conference on Disarmament for the future. For my part, and with the cooperation of all members of the Conference, I shall continue to seek ways and means to contribute to the attainment of that objective.

It remains only for me to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and to Mr. Bensmail, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, and their small team of dedicated staff, for their valuable support and assistance to the Conference during its 1995 session.

I should like now to add one or two remarks with regard to the draft resolution I would like to circulate for the consideration of the members of the First Committee. As President of the Conference on Disarmament, I have with me copies of the draft resolution on the adoption of the report of the Conference, and I should like any delegation that so wishes to attend a consultative meeting to consider it.

The Chairman: I am sure that delegations will take note of the information just provided by the representative of Morocco regarding the draft resolution on adoption of the report of the Conference on Disarmament. Delegations will also note that there will be a meeting tomorrow afternoon to discuss the draft resolution.

Mr. Vajpayee (India): May I at the outset join all the previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that under your guidance the deliberations of the First Committee will have a successful outcome. I should also like to convey my congratulations to the other officers of the Committee and to assure you all of the full cooperation of my delegation in your endeavours.

The year 1995 is, as has been remarked, a particularly significant one, not only because of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which provides us with an opportunity to learn from past experience and to prepare for the challenges ahead, but also because major developments have taken place this year in the disarmament field. While negotiations on conventional weapons, with a view to restricting the use of land-mines, and on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty are moving ahead satisfactorily, we cannot ignore the unconditional and indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), a major, if flawed, disarmament instrument. The nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States have now been legitimized for all time, and the division of the world into nuclear haves and have-nots has been perpetuated. In our view, this is a serious development, and one that is bound to have an impact on all disarmament negotiations unless the nuclear-weapon States commit themselves to adopt further measures towards the elimination of their nuclear weapons within a time-bound phased programme. However, we have noted with concern that since May of this year there has been marked reluctance on the part of some nuclear-weapon States even to discuss such a programme of phased elimination of such weapons of mass destruction. The seriousness of the situation is further compounded by the recent nuclear tests carried out by some nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

Let it not be said that we do not appreciate the significance of the progress that has been made in nuclear-arms control. Yet, despite that progress, the number of nuclear weapons that will be left over even after the reductions are completed is not only a factor potentially capable of destabilizing international peace and security but is more than enough to destroy the world many times over. Our Foreign Minister, speaking in the General Assembly a few weeks ago, said:

> "Our goal — shared, I believe by most of us here — is a world from which nuclear weapons have been eliminated. The nuclear-weapon States claim to share this goal, but their present objective is to retain nuclear weapons while making sure others do not get them.
>
> "The logic of this is hard to understand. It cannot be argued that the security of a few countries depends on their having nuclear weapons and that that of the

rest depends on their not having them." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 12th meeting, p. 16)*

Security doctrines are still based on ideas of nuclear deterrence and have moved on to newer nuances, such as minimum deterrence and mutually assured safety. These doctrines are being used to justify the continued retention and the option of possible use of nuclear weapons.

The end of the cold war and the emergence of an increasingly interdependent world linked by the imperatives of economy, commerce and technology challenge the logic of these doctrines. It is in this context that the Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, meeting recently in Cartagena called

> "for a renunciation of strategic doctrines based upon the use of nuclear weapons and ... for the adoption of an action plan for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, within a time-bound framework".

They further called on

> "the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee to commence negotiations early in 1996 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework, as envisaged in paragraph 50 of the [Final Document of the] first special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament, and to this end they decided to introduce a resolution at the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly".

We are aware of the heavy agenda of the Conference in 1996, yet we are sure that it would be possible to find slots for the ad hoc committee to start meeting early in 1996. We intend to work with other non-aligned countries to introduce a resolution on this issue.

We believe that the comprehensive test-ban treaty, the proposed convention on the cut-off of fissile material and the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons, on which a resolution — 49/76 E — was adopted last year by an overwhelming majority, are essential steps in the process of eliminating nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. As our Prime Minister stated last week in Cartagena, speaking of the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty and the cut-off convention:

> "While the aims of both these treaties are laudable, and we support them wholeheartedly, we must ensure that we do not lose yet another opportunity to obtain a commitment to universal and comprehensive disarmament."

Turning to the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty themselves, we are satisfied with the progress made so far in the Conference on Disarmament, though we are aware that much work remains to be done and that many significant gaps in positions remain. We are determined to continue our contribution to this process with a view to concluding a global treaty in 1996.

As I have already stated, in our view the comprehensive test-ban treaty must be an integral step in the process of nuclear disarmament. Developing new warheads or refining existing ones after a treaty is in place, using innovative technology, would be as contrary to the spirit of the comprehensive test-ban treaty as violating the NPT would be to the spirit of non-proliferation. The treaty must therefore contain a binding commitment on the international community, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to take further measures, within an agreed time-frame, towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The scope of the treaty should cover the complete cessation of nuclear tests by all States, in all environments and for all time. We do not believe that there should be any exceptions for carrying out nuclear tests under any circumstances. This should thus inhibit, in a non-discriminatory manner, the proliferation of nuclear weapons in both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions. This needs to be clearly spelt out in the article on the scope of the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

We believe that the verification system being designed for the treaty should be universal in its application, non-discriminatory and should guarantee equal access to all States. The International Data Centre, working as an integral part of the Technical Secretariat, should have the capacity to receive, assess and analyse data from the four components of the International Monitoring System (IMS). On-site inspections should be carried out only in rare circumstances and in the least intrusive and most cost-effective manner possible. We believe that on-site requests should be based on IMS data. Full opportunity should be provided to the State party to be inspected to assist in clarifying the situation through a mandatory consultation and clarification procedure. The Executive Council should thoroughly examine the request and take a decision by a three-fourths majority of its members.

A managed access regime should operate during the on-site inspection to maintain a balance between the rights and obligations of the State party being inspected. Such an approach will deter frivolous or abusive requests and would add to the credibility of the treaty. I have outlined the basic thrust of our approach to the negotiations on the treaty, and I hope that we will be able to reach agreement on these issues, at both the political and the technical level, early next year.

It will be recalled that India was one of the lead sponsors of a resolution — 48/75 L — which was adopted by consensus in 1993, on "Prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices". In our view, this was a major step ahead in the process of nuclear disarmament. We therefore regret that negotiations did not begin on this issue in the course of the last two years. We believe that unless this convention is squarely placed in the context of nuclear disarmament, it is unlikely to gather the universal support it should. Some nuclear-weapon States have already stopped the production of fissile material. A convention that merely recognizes that fact and seeks to universalize it as a purely non-proliferation measure is unlikely to be meaningful.

We sincerely hope that the international community will exhibit the same political will to ban nuclear weapons as it did to ban biological and chemical weapons. India had actively participated in the negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and was among the first States to sign it. We are now in the process of completing our internal procedures for ratifying it. India, however, does not possess chemical weapons and therefore hopes that those major States possessing such weapons will make strenuous efforts to ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

As we approach the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we note with some concern the continued existence of discriminatory ad hoc export control regimes. We believe that all discriminatory restrictions contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention should be removed. Our stand against *ad hoc* control regimes is well known and received high-level endorsement at the recent summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Cartagena. The Heads of State and Government of the non-aligned countries noted that restrictions being placed on access to technology through the imposition of ad hoc export-control regimes with exclusive membership, under the pretext of proliferation concerns, tended to impede the economic and social development of developing countries.

In our view, there is a need for us to agree on multilaterally negotiated, universally accepted, non-discriminatory norms and guidelines for making sensitive technologies available to all countries for peaceful purposes. This approach would apply also to the discussions under way to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). As a State Party to the BWC, India, after actively participating in the Experts' meeting, the Special Conference and the Ad Hoc Group, is of the view that the strengthened Convention should facilitate and not restrict the peaceful uses of biotechnology. A commitment in this regard should form an essential part of any verification regime.

Moving from weapons of mass destruction to conventional weapons, we do not see that we, the international community, have a choice between weapons that could exterminate entire populations and the so-called conventional weapons. We feel that, while pressing ahead towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, we should also take steps to curb the excessive production, development and build-up of conventional weapons beyond the legitimate defence requirements of States. Arms transfers need to be transparent, responsible and should not aggravate tensions in any region. This applies in particular to the transfer of small arms and light weapons. Innovative means for international cooperation to control such transfers need to be developed. The diversion of small arms and light weapons to non-State entities and the illicit arms trade require urgent international action, as the impact on the social stability of countries and the destructive consequences of fuelling terrorism, subversion and drug trafficking are dangers to which all countries are subject today.

At the recent Review Conference of the States Parties to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, India had supported a total ban on a new conventional weapon while it was still at a prototype stage. We were however satisfied that we were able to adopt a protocol which banned the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons. We hope that before it is too late we will reach agreement also on a ban on the production of these terrible weapons.

We were not so happy with the outcome of the negotiations on the Protocol on land-mines. In responding to the humanitarian needs of civilians affected by the indiscriminate effects of the detritus of war, member States parties to the Protocol made major progress in trying to

evolve a consensus and it was our view that we could have successfully concluded our negotiations in Vienna. We were, therefore, bitterly disappointed, in view of the urgency of the crisis, at the postponement of the final phase of the Conference. We look forward to a successful conclusion early next year and hope that all countries, in the interests of the humanitarian cause, will accept restrictions on their own systems of weaponry. India, having agreed to the extension of the scope of the Protocol to non-international armed conflicts as defined in the Geneva Conventions, has proposed a ban on the use of land-mines in such conflicts and a ban on the transfer of these weapons. We made this latter proposal in order to encourage the extension of the existing voluntary moratoriums. We would, therefore, be happy to join other sponsors of the draft resolution on a moratorium on the export of land-mines, with the goal of their eventual elimination as viable and humane alternatives are developed. Until such time as agreement is reached on a strengthened Protocol II to the inhumane weapons Convention, we expect all countries to exercise the greatest control in the transfer of mines. As we have had occasion to state elsewhere, India does not export, and does not intend to export, any kind of land-mines.

Therefore, on conventional weapons, with the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, to which India has contributed regularly, a move has been made towards transparency, and with the Review Conference of the Convention on certain conventional weapons some steps have been taken towards restricting and in some cases prohibiting the use of some kinds of conventional weapons.

On weapons of mass destruction the progress is less satisfactory; the Chemical Weapons Convention has yet to enter into force; and the Biological Weapons Convention and the comprehensive test-ban treaty still require a great deal of work.

As we expect negotiations and action on all these important subjects to be completed by the end of 1996, we believe that 1997 would be an opportune time to review progress in the entire field of disarmament in the post-cold-war era. The Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries have called for the convening of a fourth special session on disarmament in 1997 that would review progress in the process of disarmament and mobilize public opinion in favour of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and of the control and reduction of conventional weapons. My delegation will work with other interested delegations on a draft resolution on this subject.

This morning the representative of Pakistan referred to the tension in South Asia. Let me make it clear that there is no tension and no threat to international peace and security on the part of India. There is no situation that cannot be resolved by bilateral talks. As the Committee may be aware, India has been calling for bilateral talks with Pakistan for the past several years. We have indicated, at the highest political level, our willingness to discuss all issues, including Kashmir. Our offer has been backed by a series of detailed proposals for confidence-building measures, including disarmament-related confidence-building measures.

Our repeated offers of dialogue have received no response from Pakistan. We therefore continue to be amazed that Pakistani representatives take every opportunity in multilateral forums to raise alarms and accusations about the so-called dispute over Kashmir. The only dispute is the continued occupation of Indian territory by Pakistan. I remind the Committee that the issue brought to the United Nations by India in 1948 was the aggression by Pakistan against India.

As for the proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, our views on this perennial issue are too well known to bear any annual repetition.

I conclude by inviting Pakistan to sit at the negotiating table to try sincerely to resolve differences so that both countries might be able to work for the well-being and prosperity of their peoples.

The Chairman. May I remind delegations that there are still five speakers on the list for this meeting, plus at least two statements in right of reply and my short statement on the programme of work for the next few days. I wish only to draw the attention of speakers to the time restraints and would ask them to try to limit their statements as much as possible.

Mrs. Regmi (Nepal): On behalf of the Nepalese delegation and on my own behalf, I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that under your able guidance the Committee will have fruitful deliberations.

The general debate of the First Committee is taking place at a time when the climate of international peace and security is becoming increasingly positive. The year 1995

is even more exciting. It is a year in which the United Nations, the relentless pursuer for the past five decades of a vision of a weapon-free world, is commemorating its fiftieth anniversary. Another major focus of the year is the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. These two events are the most memorable ones, both for the United Nations and for the international community.

With the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty a major milestone has been passed in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. Now is the time for the international community faithfully to implement the objectives adopted at the Conference. Foremost among these is the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Nepal welcomes the progress made thus far in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty by the end of 1996.

Of equal importance to my delegation is the early conclusion of a treaty banning the production of weapons grade fissile material for weapons use. We feel that such a treaty would be an additional instrument in our efforts to cap nuclear proliferation. Nepal therefore expresses deep disappointment at the resumption of nuclear testing and hopes that this series of testing will not impede the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty in the stipulated time-frame.

Nepal fully supports the efforts geared towards eliminating other categories of weapons of mass destruction. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a most important instrument for ensuring regional as well as global stability. Like other delegations, Nepal supports the call for the intensification of efforts for its ratification in order to make it operational as soon as possible. Outlawing this category of weapons is equally necessary considering their devastating effects on the civilian population.

There is no doubt that weapons of mass destruction continue to command international attention, but we must not lose sight of the problems caused by conventional weapons. We wish here to point out that in the era following the Second World War, conventional weapons have caused the most misery to mankind and have always been a destabilizing factor. Nepal is, therefore, ready to support the draft resolution that is to be submitted by Japan for the establishment of a group of experts to examine ways and means of preventing and reducing the accumulation and circulation of such weapons. My delegation believes that consideration of conventional weapons should be an item of priority on the agenda of the United Nations. We are pleased to note the importance given by the Secretary-General to the importance of what he calls "micro-disarmament". Transparency in armaments, especially in the area of conventional weapons, is extremely important. Nepal therefore welcomes the United Nations's Register of Conventional Arms and continues to support the work of the Secretary-General to further expand and develop this system by 1997.

We also consider that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in more and more regions of the world should be further encouraged, as these efforts go a long way towards attainment of the goal of global disarmament. It is precisely for this reason that Nepal supported the General Assembly resolutions 49/72 and 49/82 calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia and implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, respectively, and would like to reiterate its commitments to these concepts. My delegation welcomes the recently concluded Pelindaba Treaty, which will establish the African nuclear-weapon-free zone. The decision a few days ago by the Governments of the United Kingdom, France and the United States agreeing to sign the Protocol to the Treaty of Rarotonga is viewed by my delegation as yet another important step towards peace and stability in that region.

Nepal holds the firm belief that regional and subregional approaches to confidence-building measures can contribute immensely towards removing the mistrust that is the fundamental cause of the arms race. This is the objective pursued by the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. Nepal was greatly disturbed to read the Secretary-General's report (A/50/380) suggesting possible closure of the Regional Centres for Disarmament.

The Kathmandu Centre has been instrumental in sensitizing regional opinion in favour of confidence- and security-building measures through regional and subregional dialogue, thus making a significant contribution to regional peace and disarmament. We urge support for the continued operation and further strengthening of the Kathmandu Centre as an essential promoter of the "Kathmandu Process" — to promote regional peace and disarmament dialogue in Asia and the Pacific region. The Kathmandu Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific has always been effective and we address our appeal to Member States, both from Asia and the Pacific region and beyond, as well as non-governmental organizations and foundations to make voluntary contributions to allow the Kathmandu Centre to remain

functional. In this context, my delegation also fully supports the establishment of a disarmament subcentre in Hiroshima as a subsidiary body of the Kathmandu Centre on the basis of voluntary contributions. As a matter of fact, the establishment of such subsidiary bodies in the region on a financially self-maintained basis is indeed welcome to my delegation, as we are convinced that they will contribute further to the cause of disarmament and peace.

Finally, the link between disarmament and development cannot be overemphasized. The removal of threats to international peace and security depends on our efforts to intensify socio-economic development. Nepal therefore earnestly hopes that the resources released from disarmament will be diverted for the purposes of the social and economic development of developing countries, particularly the least developed and those that are land-locked. Such a use of the peace dividend, in our view, will be in the larger interest of the peace, security and well-being of the people.

Ms. Darmanin (Malta): Since this is the first time that I have addressed the Committee, may I, on behalf of my delegation, congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election. Under your skilful guidance, this Committee will undoubtedly register progress and fulfil many expectations. My congratulations are also addressed to the other members of the Bureau, whose help will be invaluable in assisting the proceedings of this Committee.

Allow me, on behalf of the delegation of Malta, to make a few reflections on our work during the coming weeks. In expressing its views, this delegation again associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union. The work of the First Committee during this session is of unique importance. It coincides with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and immediately follows the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This landmark decision is another step in the fulfilment of the primary mandate of the Organization, namely the maintenance of international peace and security. The will and commitment which led to the indefinite extension should be pursued to achieve universality. Equally important are the other Principles and Objectives agreed to by the States Parties calling for nuclear-weapon-free zones, nuclear safeguards and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The underlying notion of all the principles of the NPT is that of providing States with security and assuring them of security. Malta notes with satisfaction the assertion by the Conference of State Parties that further steps towards security assurances to non-nuclear weapons States

> "could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument".

We pledge our support to work towards this end.

The most recent nuclear tests indicate the clear need to translate the utmost restraint into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The commitment to finalize the treaty by the end of 1996 requires sustained momentum. This, coupled with a cut-off treaty on the production of fissile material, is evidence of the will of the international community to achieve disarmament.

The threat of destruction by nuclear weapons should not be the only focus of our attention. Increasingly, this Committee has taken into account the ills and suffering brought about by conventional weaponry. Fifty years ago the founding fathers pledged to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Malta shares in the grave concern expressed by the international community with regard to the suffering brought to millions of people through the use and indiscriminate effects of anti-personnel land-mines. We will again join in sponsoring the draft resolution calling for a moratorium on the use of land-mines and the need to develop more humane and viable alternatives.

Also requiring immediate attention and concerted action is the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and the strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The maintenance of peace and security rests on confidence between and amongst nations. During the years of the cold war the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) discovered that confidence-building was the most effective element in the promotion of a broader concept of security. This concept is guided not only by politico-military concerns, but by a will to seek a more comprehensive stability.

The Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been foremost in the promotion of such confidence- and security-building measures. The recently adopted Code of Conduct further elaborates mechanisms aimed at enhancing cooperation and trust between States members of OSCE. At the United Nations, the resolutions

on transparency in armaments and those related to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms undoubtedly contribute to the growing awareness of the need for a better flow of information in the pursuit of peace.

The framework of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE is an effective and exemplary contribution towards the enhancement of regional security. This is of particular satisfaction for my delegation since it is the outcome of a proposal first launched by Malta at Helsinki in 1992, namely that the CSCE declare itself a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter. Comprehensive regional security structures could be more effective instruments for identifying, analysing and containing tensions which threaten to lead to the outbreak of hostilities or conflict. Such structures cannot act in isolation. They must monitor existing realities and potentially threatening situations with a view to containing them. Time and again experience has shown that a multifaceted approach which links vital areas such as human rights, fundamental freedoms and social justice into the broader network of comprehensive security is the foundation for stability giving peoples and nations the reassurance of peace, dignity and freedom.

The Mediterranean is one such area where perils, if left unattended to, threaten to transform the historic "middle-sea" into a permanent lake of instability. Malta has consistently supported the idea of a conference on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean and, within the concept of stability in the Mediterranean, has proposed two distinct but correlated ideas, namely that of a "Council for the Mediterranean" and that of a "Stability Pact for the Mediterranean".

A "Council for the Mediterranean", through an association of Mediterranean States, would facilitate cooperation at the highest level and, through a parliamentary aspect, could enhance joint action in the identification and resolution of problems of common concern.

At the concluding conference on the "Stability Pact" for Europe, Malta proposed a stability pact for the Mediterranean. Such a pact, based on a round-table system, would facilitate discussions to pre-empt new threats to the security of peoples and States in the region and would bring together parties in dispute. The fact that this proposal was generally well received is encouraging and spurs us to pursue it further.

Both proposals are intended to foster dialogue in a region of turbulence. The region's diversities are many and the threats pervasive. The common understanding of such diversities can be achieved only through dialogue. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, Professor Guido de Marco, in his statement to the General Assembly at the fiftieth session, pointed out the dangers and possible solutions for the Mediterranean:

> "The Mediterranean's wealth lies in its heritage of cultural, religious and social diversity. A forced mutation of this rich mosaic into uniformity would be destabilizing. Confidence-building and mutual understanding create the route that leads to security and cooperation. We must walk that arduous path. Within multicultural diversity we must discover the common values that help foster dialogue. This requires shedding preconceived notions. It requires strong political will. It requires that we supplant instinctive mistrust with a spirit of mutual respect." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 10th meeting, p. 22*)

The time dedicated by the United Nations over the years to defusing and resolving issues in the Mediterranean is indicative of the weight which the international community attaches to the region and the spill-over potential of past and current crises. A successful process in this region is important, not only for its own sake, but also as a means of inspiring patterns of cooperation in other areas characterized by multicultural diversity.

Just recently we completed the commemorative meeting of the General Assembly, held in celebration of its fiftieth anniversary. Our leaders stressed the need to profit from the new post-cold-war environment in order to register and consolidate progress in the field of disarmament. Our negotiations on security and disarmament issues in this Committee must reflect the will of our Heads of State and Government to translate words into deeds for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Lao delegation, I would like to express my satisfaction at seeing you, an illustrious diplomat of Mongolia and, more important, a personal and good friend, presiding over the First Committee of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. I am confident that, with your diplomatic skill and talent, you will guide the work of the Committee to a successful outcome. I would also like to pay tribute to your

predecessor, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador, for his able leadership of the Committee last year.

The current session of the First Committee is being held at a special juncture in the history of the United Nations. Throughout half a century, the Organization has played an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security. While we have witnessed its achievements, we are still living in an atmosphere of uncertainty and facing many challenges. The existence of nuclear arsenals and other weapons of mass destruction remains, unfortunately, a source of concern and preoccupation for humanity. In our opinion, it is high time the world community became aware of this danger, redoubled its efforts and reacted together with great determination to reduce and eliminate these dangerous weapons from the face of our planet.

Since the last session, the international community has made tremendous efforts — but not easy ones — in the field of disarmament efforts which constitute an important element for peace and security in the next century, namely a decision to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), together with two other decisions adopted without a vote at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT. The Lao delegation attaches great importance to the latter two decisions: one on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament", and the second on "Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty".

It is our view that these two decisions constitute an essential element in, and framework for, the effective implementation of the provisions of the Treaty. We very much hope that a full and vigorous implementation of the three decisions, conceived as a package, would progressively foster dynamic steps towards nuclear disarmament.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, also considers that a comprehensive test-ban treaty, once concluded, will mark an important step towards nuclear disarmament. It is encouraging to note that the world community, especially the nuclear-weapon States, has recently shown its commitment to the early conclusion of the treaty. In this context, we welcome the remarkable progress made in the Conference on Disarmament towards the successful conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty — a total ban on nuclear testing — no later, we hope, than in 1996. We also support and welcome the recent announcement by some nuclear-weapon States of their decision on the true zero-yield option, which would, we think, give an impetus to the effort towards non-proliferation now under way.

In parallel with the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty conducted in the Conference on Disarmament, as agreed at the Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the immediate commencement and early conclusion of a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — the cut-off treaty — requires great efforts and a true willingness on the part of the members of the Conference on Disarmament to overcome the difficulties encountered. We share the view that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, established early this year by the Conference on Disarmament, will be able to begin work early next year.

The issue of security assurances remains also a serious concern of the vast majority of the non-nuclear-weapon States. Having voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons, the non-nuclear-weapon States should have the right to receive such assurances in the form of an internationally legally binding instrument. In our view, it would be unfair and unfortunate if those that "have" nuclear weapons did not give these assurances under a legally binding form to those that "have not".

In the field of confidence-building measures and disarmament we generally support the creation in different parts of the world of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In this regard, we welcome the recent announcement by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of their intention to sign the relevant protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996. This declaration is a positive contribution to efforts towards the nuclear-non-proliferation process. In the same vein, we also welcome the conclusion of a treaty on an African nuclear-weapons-free zone — the Treaty of Pelindaba.

As a member of the community of South-East Asia, a region well known for its activities in favour of the maintenance of peace and security, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is sincerely contributing to efforts aimed at making this region a zone of peace, amity and cooperation and a zone free of nuclear weapons. True to its consistent policy of peace, friendship and cooperation with all countries the world over, our country will spare no effort to continue to work in this direction.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has experienced a three-decades-long and devastating war.

More than 20 years after the end of this cruel conflict, the Lao people are still facing the deadly legacy of the war. Over 50 per cent of the Lao territory is littered with unexploded ordnance, one type dropped from the air (cluster bombs) and another left over from ground battles (land-mines, mortar shells and munitions). Unexploded ordnance not only continues to maim and kill innocent and defenceless people, it also obstructs economic development, thus worsening the poverty of the population in the affected areas.

Since 1975, with the cooperation of, and assistance from, friendly countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, the Lao Government has done its utmost to clear the unexploded ordnance. We have registered many successes but much still remains to be done. Recently, on 1 August 1995, the Lao Government, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), signed a Trust Fund for Clearance of Unexploded Ordnance.

The Fund has the definite objective of providing special resources for a coherent programme of unexploded ordnance clearance, community awareness, surveys and other related initiatives. The clearance programme is to be managed by a steering committee chaired by the Lao Government, with representatives from concerned ministries and provinces, as well as representatives from UNDP and UNICEF. Designated as the ministry responsible for coordination, overall management and monitoring of the clearance programme, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is now preparing a yearly work plan to serve as a guide in the clearance efforts and to determine which areas should be cleared as a priority. It is our hope that friendly countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations would contribute to this Trust Fund and make the undertaking a reality.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, located in Kathmandu, is playing an important role in the promotion of regional dialogue, thus contributing to regional peace and disarmament. We hope that with voluntary funding this Centre will continue to function.

The current commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations makes this year an exceptional one — a year which provides the world community with an unprecedented occasion, not only to review and assess the achievements in the field of disarmament, but also to exert joint efforts to accomplish, gradually, what remains to be done. More important, in good conscience and together, we should all strive to achieve, progressively, our ultimate goal, that of general and complete disarmament. Our hard work and dedication will help prepare this long path to enable the next generation to celebrate the commemoration of the next half-century in an atmosphere of genuine peace and international cooperation. In this undertaking, the Lao People's Democratic Republic would surely do what it can to offer its modest contribution.

The Chairman: May I remind all delegations making statements that we have very little time left and appeal to them to keep their remarks as brief as possible.

I now call on the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Kung (International Committee of the Red Cross): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) would like, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to thank you for giving us an opportunity to contribute to this debate.

A few weeks ago we assumed that we would be speaking at this session of the First Committee on the results of the first Review Conference of the parties to the 1981 inhumane weapons Convention. As delegations know, the Conference was adjourned as it was unable to reach agreement on amendments to Protocol II, on land-mines. We share the disappointment that was felt in Vienna when this decision had to be taken. However, we are of the opinion that several important gains were made — in particular, the adoption of the Protocol on blinding laser weapons and agreement on certain aspects of Protocol II.

The ICRC would like to express its gratitude for the opportunity to take such an active role in the Review Conference. In doing so, we strive to fulfil our mandate to promote the development of international humanitarian law in a way that gives due weight to humanitarian concerns. Our comments and suggestions are based on our wide practical experience of armed conflicts and the problems they engender.

The adoption, on 13 October 1995, of Protocol IV, on blinding laser weapons, is a major achievement. To our knowledge, this is the first time since 1868 that a weapon has been prohibited before it could be used on the battlefield. Thus, humanity has been spared the horror that such blinding weapons would have created. Quite apart from the actual wording of the instrument, the effect of its

adoption is a strong message that States will not tolerate the deliberate blinding of people in any circumstances. Thus, it is a triumph of civilization over barbarity. It is also a major achievement that this Protocol includes a prohibition on the transfer of blinding laser weapons. The ICRC sincerely hopes that States will adhere to it as quickly as possible and will take all appropriate measures to ensure respect for its provisions.

During the three-week session of the Review Conference in Vienna, 36 people were killed and 243 maimed by land-mines in Cambodia alone, and worldwide about 1,600 people suffered the same fate. During the same period, medical workers also paid a heavy price, 7 being killed and 21 badly injured as a result of the explosion of anti-vehicle mines in Zaire, Rwanda and Mozambique. These sad statistics illustrate the urgent need to deal effectively with the land-mine crisis. All delegations in Vienna were certainly aware of the importance of reaching agreement on amendments to Protocol II.

The problem centred on the criteria that should be preponderant in any decision. During the last few days of the session, many delegations began to speak more openly of their difficulties, and these illustrated in particular the shortcomings of a technical solution. Some delegations indicated that they would need grace periods of up to 15 years to fit their mines with a minimum metal content and equip them with self-destructing or self-deactivating systems. If mines continue to be sown at the present rate, up to 75 million could be added to the existing 110 million in such a period. Even more disturbing is the uncertainty as to the reliability that may be expected from the so-called "smart mines" that are to be developed.

The ICRC therefore appeals to States to evaluate whether measures short of a total ban on anti-personnel land-mines will, in fact, put a stop to the present situation. Is the limited military utility of anti-personnel land-mines really worth the tragedy they are causing? Should not strict controls be placed also on anti-vehicle mines, which regularly kill or maim civilians, including humanitarian workers who are trying to help the victims of war? We earnestly hope that States will rise above short-term national interests, in favour of the interests of humanity as a whole.

The Review Conference is due to reconvene in January and again in April 1996. We hope that during this period many more States will ratify or accede to the Convention and that those which were unable to participate at the Vienna session will be able to do so at the sessions due to be held in Geneva.

We trust that the gains made at the Vienna session will remain — namely, the agreement to extend the application of Protocol II to non-international armed conflicts; the assignment of responsibility for the clearance of mines at the end of active hostilities; and measures to enable humanitarian personnel to accomplish their work on behalf of victims of conflicts in mined areas. In this regard, we are particularly grateful to States for their willingness to give specific protection to personnel of humanitarian organizations, including the ICRC and the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The work of the Conference, however, will have an effect beyond regulation of the use of land-mines. The Convention as a whole must be seen to be a living and effective instrument. We earnestly hope that the Convention will be reviewed frequently and regularly, so that the international community may be enabled to evaluate the effectiveness of its existing provisions, to encourage further accessions and to allow for amendments or additional Protocols as the need arises.

Our concern about land-mines and blinding weapons is rooted in our own experience of a much larger phenomenon — the virtually unrestricted flow of vast quantities of weapons around the world. Our first-hand experience in the dozens of conflicts that are raging in various regions is that enormous quantities of small arms are available to almost any organization or individual seeking them and that, where these arms are used, humanitarian law is either unknown or simply not respected.

The ICRC strongly encourages this Committee to make the issue of global arms transfers a matter of high priority and to consider both the inclusion of small-arms transfers in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and possible restraints on such transfers. For its part, the ICRC intends to comply with the request of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on the Protection of War Victims by actively studying the relationship between arms availability and violations of international humanitarian law. We shall publish a report on this issue late in 1996.

An important step that this body has taken in regard to arms transfers is its resolution encouraging national moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel mines. An estimated 100 million land-mines remain stockpiled

throughout the world, and the low level of pledges at the International Meeting on Mine Clearance in July 1995 demonstrates that international commitments are insufficient to ensure the rapid removal of mines already in place. Any relaxation of attempts to bar exports of anti-personnel mines will only exacerbate an already dramatic situation.

The gas attack on civilians on the Tokyo underground, which took place in March, and several similar incidents remind us of the urgency of controlling the threat of chemical and biological weapons. We urge States that have not already done so to ratify the chemical weapons Convention and to ensure its early entry into force. We welcome efforts to introduce a verification regime into the biological weapons Convention and encourage non-party States to adhere to that Convention at the earliest opportunity.

Finally, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the nuclear age we should like to recall the position of the ICRC on this matter. Any use of weapons that would violate the norms of existing international humanitarian law, including customary law, is already prohibited.

In addition, we hope that any deliberations on nuclear weapons will take into account what would probably happen if the threshold were breached and nuclear weapons were actually used. The ICRC has already indicated its opinion that the only effective solution for such weapons is their total prohibition. This has been achieved for chemical and biological weapons and for blinding laser weapons. We hope that the end of the cold war will allow States to work towards achieving the same result for nuclear weapons.

Mr. Tóth (Hungary): After 6 o'clock I think short and concentrated statements are the "flavour of the week" but I should like to begin by expressing my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, in the Chair.

I should like to introduce today a draft resolution on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction on behalf of the following delegations: Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

According to the draft resolution, which will be circulated under the symbol A/C.1/50/L.1, the General Assembly would note with satisfaction that more than 130 States are parties to the Convention, including all the permanent members of the Security Council.

The General Assembly would recall its resolution 48/65, adopted without a vote at the forty-eighth session, in which it "commended the final report of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to Identify and Examine Potential Verification Measures from a Scientific and Technical Standpoint".

It would recall further its resolution 49/86, adopted without a vote at the forty-ninth session, in which it welcomed the final report of the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, held in September 1994, adopted by consensus, in which the States parties

> "agreed to establish an ad hoc group, open to all States parties, whose objective shall be to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included ... in a legally binding instrument to be submitted for the consideration of the States parties".

Further, in the draft resolution, the Assembly would recall the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference, as well as the provisions of the Convention related to scientific and technological cooperation, and the related provisions of the Final Document of the Third Review Conference, the final report of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts and the final report of the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, held in September 1994.

In its operative part the Assembly would welcome the work begun by the Ad Hoc Group and would urge it, in pursuing its mandate, to complete its work as soon as possible and submit its report, which shall be adopted by consensus, to the States parties, to be considered at the Fourth Review Conference or later at a special conference.

It would request the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depository Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as might be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Third Review Conference, as well as the decisions contained in the Final Report of the Special Conference, including all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Group.

The Assembly would note that, at the request of the States parties, a Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention will be held at Geneva in 1996 and that, following appropriate consultations, a Preparatory Committee for that Conference will be formed, open to all States parties to the Convention, and that the Committee will meet at Geneva in 1996.

Finally, the Assembly would call upon all signatory States that had not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay, and would also call upon those other States that had not signed the Convention to become parties thereto at an early date, thus contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention.

It is the hope of the sponsors that the draft resolution will generate wide consensus in this body.

The Chairman: The Committee has heard the last speaker on the list of speakers for this afternoon's meeting and thus has concluded its general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items.

Before making a statement on the programme of work of the Committee I shall call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind delegations that the ground rules for such interventions apply.

Mr. Sha Zukang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): In the past few days the Chinese delegation has listened attentively to the statements made by the various delegations in the general debate. As a number of countries have expressed concern in varying degrees about the nuclear tests carried out by China I wish to take this opportunity to elaborate further on the position and policies of the Chinese Government on the issue of nuclear tests.

The position of the Chinese Government on the question of nuclear testing is consistent and clear-cut.

First, the Chinese Government has all along exercised the utmost restraint with regard to its nuclear tests, always keeping either the scale or the number of its nuclear tests to the minimum. That is so because China has consistently opposed the nuclear-arms race. China for its part has never had the intention of participating in the nuclear-arms race nor has it done so. It has been the position of the Chinese Government that there should be a complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, just as there is a comprehensive prohibition of chemical and biological weapons. Furthermore, the Chinese Government has, time and again, stated that upon the entry into force of the comprehensive test-ban treaty China will cease nuclear testing.

Secondly, China's possession of a limited number of nuclear weapons is solely for self-defence. China's nuclear weapons are not directed against any other country and therefore constitute no threat to any other country, much less to international peace and security. It was under certain historical and international circumstances that China developed and came into possession of a limited number of nuclear weapons: China was compelled to do so for the sake of self-defence after having been subjected to repeated nuclear threats by certain nuclear Powers. China opposes hegemonism and pursues an independent foreign policy of peace. As is known to all, China is not allied to any major Power or major military blocs nor does it come under the nuclear umbrella of other countries. Precisely because of its own experience of being subjected to nuclear threats, China always opposes the policy of nuclear deterrence and will never base its own security on a nuclear threat against other countries. Since 1964, when it came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has unilaterally undertaken unconditionally not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and has undertaken unconditionally not to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon countries and nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Pursuant to such a policy, the Chinese Government, as early as 1973, signed Additional Protocol II of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, undertaking not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the Latin American nuclear-weapon-free zone, not to test, manufacture, produce, stockpile, install or deploy nuclear weapons in this zone, and not to send any nuclear transport or delivery vehicle across the territory, territorial sea or air space of this zone.

In 1986, after the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty entered into force, the Chinese Government signed Protocols 2 and 3 of the Treaty in the following year, stating that China would respect the status of the zone and would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against this zone and would not carry out nuclear tests in the zone.

The Chinese Government rejoices at the recent substantive progress achieved by the African countries in their effort to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. Proceeding from its consistent position, China resolutely supports the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone

Treaty and will undertake its corresponding obligations towards that zone.

In recent years, with the end of the cold war, China has called on the nuclear-weapon countries concerned to enter into immediate negotiations for the conclusion of treaties on the non-first use of nuclear weapons among the nuclear countries and on the non-use or threat of use of such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon countries and nuclear-weapon-free zones, thereby supporting the negotiations and the conclusion of legally binding international instruments on the provision of security assurances for the non-nuclear countries. All of these facts show that China's policy on nuclear weapons has been consistent, open and above board, exemplifying the sincerity and persistent effort of the Chinese Government to maintain international peace and security.

Thirdly, China has always supported the goal of achieving a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test ban within the framework of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. In 1993, at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the Chinese delegation, on the basis of this position, joined in the adoption by consensus, of General Assembly resolution 48/70, on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. China has, with a positive and constructive attitude, participated in the relevant negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and has been working hard for the conclusion, not later than in 1996, of a good comprehensive test-ban treaty, a treaty that fulfils the requirements of resolution 48/70 and the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban of the Conference on Disarmament.

I wish also to point out at this juncture that the comprehensive test-ban treaty will be an important step towards the ultimate objective of a complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and the treaty will be of indefinite effect.

For this reason, we must attach importance in our negotiations to the quality of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. The Chinese delegation believes that the comprehensive test-ban treaty should be able to ensure equality among all future States parties, benefit from universal participation and have a clearly defined scope of prohibition and an effective, fair and rational verification regime. For this purpose the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva must intensify its negotiations and strive to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty as soon as possible, and not later than 1996, in keeping with the relevant decision of the Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Chinese delegation is of the view that it would be difficult and unnecessary to foretell the exact date of next year's conclusion of the Treaty. As none of us is a fortune teller, it will be better for us to speed up our work rather than make good-hearted predictions.

I have once again explained the position of the Chinese delegation on the question of nuclear testing. My delegation is ready to proceed on the basis of such a position and to continue its exchange of views with other delegations for the purpose of increasing mutual understanding, so that every effort will be made to facilitate the work of the Committee in the spirit of consensus.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): Today, once again, several countries have expressed their concerns with regard to our new series of nuclear tests. I am not going to repeat the arguments put forward at earlier meetings regarding the legitimacy of our final series or its innocuousness. We have been clear about the step we have taken and our respect for our commitments. I would merely ask those who have, in varying degrees, criticized my country to back off a bit. When it comes to questions of nuclear tests, things should be viewed in the longer term. In a few months the fears that have been expressed will, in the nature of things, have faded away, and I am convinced that what the First Committee will remember will be France's overall approach, which is a cohesive albeit multifaceted whole, and which includes support for a speedy conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, testing, and a clear decision in favour of the zero option. That approach will lead to a decisive move towards the end of all nuclear testing, which is the wish of the vast majority of those here present.

It is in that connection that I should like to refer to the announced intention of some States to submit a draft resolution on the question of nuclear tests and to make an appeal to this Committee's wisdom. We have noted that the paragraphs of the Cartagena document in which the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries have set forth their views on this subject, strong and regrettable as they may be, are not couched in the extreme terms that a small number of delegations have employed, particularly here in this room. In the framework of our discussions it is important that the language employed at Cartagena not be exceeded by formulations I would describe as "emotional". I am therefore appealing to all countries, and to those that are above all our allies or partners, to refrain from the use of excessive language. Just as the expression of divergent views is normal, so violence and hostility are

incomprehensible and prejudicial to the serious nature of our work. We must all bear in mind that in the years to come we will be dealing with essential deadlines in regard to disarmament and non-proliferation. Let us therefore take care that, when treating a question that, with regard to my country, will soon be settled to everyone's satisfaction, we not open wounds that may take some time to heal. The urgency and importance of the work before us demands this. It is in this sense that I rely on the Committee's wisdom.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): It is unfortunate that our call for peace and non-proliferation in South Asia should have evoked a response from the representative of India which I could most charitably describe as intractable and very largely fictional.

We are happy to hear from the representative of India that there is no tension in South Asia. This is a region where nearly 2 million armed men are facing each other along the Indo-Pakistan border. There are 700,000 Indian troops deployed in occupied Kashmir, engaged in the suppression of the Kashmiri freedom struggle for self-determination. There are 800 Indian soldiers for every kilometre of the Line of Control — the cease-fire line — in Jammu and Kashmir. Daily, there is an exchange of fire along the Line of Control between the two forces. Indian forces have blockaded the Neelam Valley in Azad Kashmir, and 100,000 innocent people are without food and shelter as the winter approaches and have to be supplied by air. Indian and Pakistani forces are deployed on the Siachen Glacier in what has been called "the conflict on the roof of the world".

We are also happy to hear that India is prepared for talks with Pakistan on all issues, including Kashmir. But in the same breath the representative of India calls this "the so-called dispute over Kashmir". We are used to such double-talk. We have experienced it in seven rounds of bilateral talks at the Foreign-Secretary level, which Pakistan had initiated. Jammu and Kashmir is a recognized dispute between the two countries. The resolutions of the Security Council call for a plebiscite to enable the Kashmiri people to determine their own future through a free and fair plebiscite under United Nations auspices. Kashmir is on the Security Council agenda. Kashmir is shown as a disputed territory on the United Nations maps. The oldest United Nations peace-keeping force of all, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), is deployed along the Line of Control in Kashmir.

At the last round of talks with India, the Indian Foreign Secretary stated that India had the right to use as much force as is necessary to suppress the Kashmiri struggle. This, we submit, is not the way to resolve problems. India has indeed sent us six "non-papers", but Pakistan had before that presented two "non-papers". We ask the representative of India: Is India prepared to discuss all eight papers proposed by the two countries? If India is prepared, it would be possible to resume the dialogue.

I was saddened to hear the representative of India dismiss discussion of non-proliferation in South Asia. This is a matter which concerns the destiny of more than one billion people on the subcontinent.

We hope that South Asia will also join other regions of the world where denuclearization has been achieved. Pakistan has made several proposals. Not one of them has been accepted by India.

It is our hope that, at the very least, India would be prepared to enter into the talks which have been proposed by the United States to discuss security and non-proliferation in South Asia. As we understand it, these multilateral talks were suggested in order to accommodate India's objection to regional discussions on the denuclearization issue.

India is participating in the Middle East peace talks. Why does it shy away from similar talks on South Asia? We urge India to reconsider its position and vote for peace and for non-proliferation in South Asia.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I would like, as Chairman, to make a statement on the programme of work in the days ahead. This is very important because we are soon to begin the second phase of our work, the consideration of draft resolutions. The Chair has, however, been informed that no interpretation services will be available after 6.30 p.m. this afternoon. With the concurrence of the Committee I shall make my statement at the next meeting.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.